

107K/99-09

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
<small>Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.</small>				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE 13 August 1998	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Research Report #26		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Impact of Deployment Length on Soldier Morale, Cohesion, and Mental Health.		5. FUNDING NUMBERS		
6. AUTHOR(S) Castro, C.A.				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Commander Attn: Medical Research Unit CMR 442 APO AE 09042		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) US Army Medical Research & Materiel Command Ft. Detrick, Frederick, MD 21702-5012		10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER		
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE		
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) The U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe conducted a longitudinal human dimension assessment of soldiers and units deployed for Operation Joint Endeavor (OJE). This study was the first longitudinal study conducted of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) soldiers during a major deployment. Soldiers were surveyed at three different time periods. Soldier morale and unit cohesion were assessed 1 to 3 months prior to the deployment, during the deployment (after 6 months in the Bosnia theater), and approximately one month after the soldiers returned to Germany. During OJE/OJG, all military personnel deployed to the Bosnia area of operations for more than 30 days were required to complete a mental health screening. Soldiers' mental health, personal morale, and perception of unit cohesion all change as a function of deployment. Present data indicates that all of these changes occur approximately after being deployed for 5-6 months, with changes in the mental health status occurring as early as 3-4 months after deployment.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS deployment length, morale, cohesion, mental health, Operation Joint Endeavor			15. NUMBER OF PAGES	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLAS	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLAS	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLAS	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	



Research Report

13 August 1998

U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research # 26
U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
Address: Commander, ATTN: Medical Research Unit,
CMR 442, APO AE 09042-1030

The Impact of Deployment Length on Soldier Morale, Cohesion, and Mental Health

SOLDIER MORALE AND UNIT COHESION

Background. The U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe, a Special Foreign Activity of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, conducted a longitudinal human dimension assessment of soldiers and units deployed for Operation Joint Endeavor (OJE). Soldiers in the study were assigned to the U.S. Army, Europe, and 7th Army (USAREUR), and the study was unique in that it was the first longitudinal study of USAREUR soldiers conducted during a major military deployment. Soldiers were surveyed at three different time periods. Soldier morale and unit cohesion were assessed 1 to 3 months prior to the deployment, during the deployment (after 6 months in the Bosnia theater), and approximately one month after the soldiers returned to Germany. The results below are based on the responses of over 6,000 soldiers.

Morale. Prior to deploying to Bosnia, soldier morale was modest, with 68% of the soldiers rating their morale as moderate or high. During OJE, personal morale declined slightly, with 62% of the soldiers reporting their morale as moderate or high. After returning to Germany, soldier morale increased dramatically, with 82% of the soldiers rating their morale as moderate to high (Figure 1).

Cohesion. Unlike soldier morale, which declined during the deployment, unit cohesion did not significantly change from its pre-deployment levels (62% of the soldiers rated unit cohesion as moderate to high prior to deployment and 60% of the soldiers rated unit cohesion as moderate to high during the deployment). Unit cohesion, however, did improve after the soldiers returned to Germany, with 70% of the soldiers evaluating unit cohesion from moderate to high (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Soldier Morale

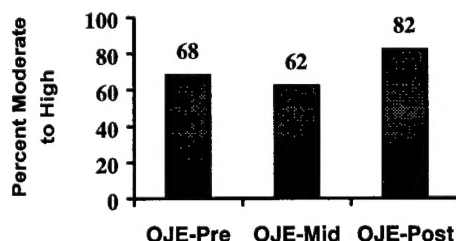
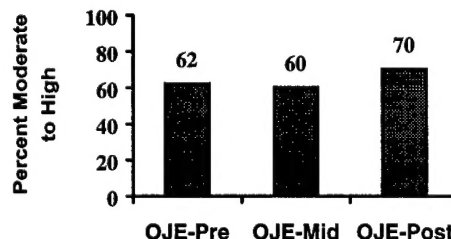


Figure 2: Unit Cohesion



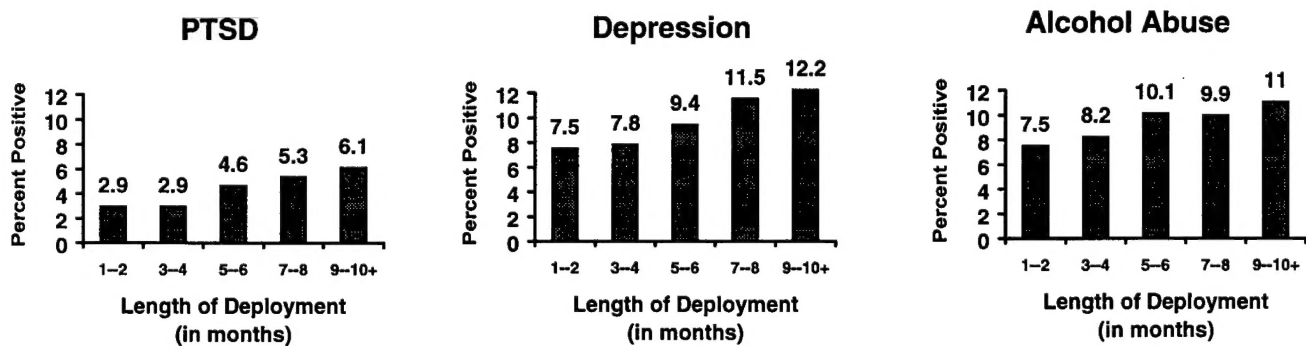
19990708 095

MENTAL HEALTH

Background. During OJE/OJG, all military personnel deployed to the Bosnia area of operations for more than 30 days were required to complete a mental health screen as part of the Joint Medical Surveillance Program. This screen assessed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and potential alcohol abuse. Over 46,000 military personnel have completed the mental health screen. It is important to note that these scales were used only to assess psychological symptoms and were not used as a clinical diagnostic instrument.

PTSD, Depression and Alcohol Abuse. Deployment length was predictive of higher psychological distress rates on all three scales (see Figure 3), with the first increase occurring after 5-6 months' deployment. These psychological distress indicators continued to increase up to 10 months' deployment.

Figure 3. Soldier Mental Health



DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Soldiers' mental health, personal morale, and perception of unit cohesion all change as a function of deployment. The present data indicate that all of these changes occur approximately after being deployed for 5-6 months, with changes in the mental health status occurring as early as 3-4 months after deployment. Thus, these findings support the setting of the tour length in Bosnia at 4 to 6 months.

Importantly, these results also demonstrate that the psychological health, morale, and unit cohesion of soldiers can be directly measured and quantified, thereby providing a useful framework for future development of psychosocial measures of soldier dimensions. These measures can be incorporated into the Army's Warfighter Physiological Status Monitoring System.

References: Castro, C. A., & Adler, A. B. (1997). *Joint Medical Surveillance in Bosnia: Psychological Screening Report V FEB 96-DEC 97*, U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe. Castro, C. A., & Huffman, A. (1998). *Operation Joint Endeavor (OJE): Lessons Learned for Improving Psychological Readiness*, U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe. For more information contact MAJ Carl A. Castro, Commander, USAMRU-E, DSN: 371-2626/2007.